

OVETA CULP HOBBY AND HER "LIEUTENANTS":  
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ACTION  
IN THE WOMEN'S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS  
OF WORLD WAR II

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

OVETA CULP HOBBY AND HER “LIEUTENANTS”: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ACTION IN THE WOMEN’S ARMY AUXILIARY CORPS OF WORLD WAR II, by MAJ Vanessa A. Crockford, 80 pages.

The U.S. Army is in the midst of transformation. General Eric Shinseki began the transformation effort in 1999, when he unveiled his vision for the U.S. Army in the twenty-first century. This vision included the need to provide greater agility and versatility on the battlefield without a loss of lethality or survivability. This transformation will affect not only infrastructure and materiel, but people too. It will require additional leadership skills. Leaders must focus on how best to lead soldiers through a period of change and uncertainty, how to encourage the best and the brightest to participate in the organization, and how to insure the vitality of the organization in the future. This requires “transformational leadership.” The research question is: Are there historical examples of how to lead soldiers during a period of transformation? If so, are these examples applicable to leaders in today’s Army? The Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps and Women’s Army Corps leaders provide such an example. The Director Oveta Culp Hobby and two of her lieutenants Anna Wilson and Charity Adams offer examples of leadership during a period of transformation that is applicable today. Theirs was transformational leadership, a style worthy of study and emulation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## ACRONYMS

AEF	Army Expeditionary Force
COL	Colonel
ETO	European Theater of Operation
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
WAAC	Women's Army Auxiliary Corps
WAC	Women's Army Corps

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

It's our duty to develop soldiers and leaders who have the skills necessary to succeed today and in the future.<sup>1</sup>

General Eric K. Shinseki

The U.S. Army is in the midst of transformation. General Eric Shinseki began the transformation effort in 1999, when he unveiled his vision for the U.S. Army in the twenty-first century.<sup>2</sup> General Shinseki envisioned a new kind of Army: “Soldiers on point for the Nation transforming this, the most respected Army in the world, into a strategically responsive force that is dominant across the full spectrum of operations.”<sup>3</sup> This vision included the need to provide greater agility and versatility on the battlefield without a loss of lethality or survivability.<sup>4</sup> This transformation will incorporate new technologies and will result in lighter, more easily transportable equipment that will allow the U.S. Army to “see first, understand first, act first and finish decisively.”<sup>5</sup> The transformed U.S. Army will rely heavily on integrated soldier teams capable of operating several different weapons systems from a single platform.<sup>6</sup>

As the U.S. Army transforms its infrastructure and materiel, the men and women who lead this new force will need to transform their leadership styles as well. Today’s U.S. Army leadership is based on the “Be, Know, Do” model.<sup>7</sup> It focuses on the character of leaders, the competence of leaders and their ability to influence people, accomplish the mission and improve the organization.<sup>8</sup> It defines leadership in terms of mission accomplishment and the achievement of excellence.<sup>9</sup> It focuses on the care of subordinates in terms of discipline and morale. It is leadership by directive. Leaders take

charge, set the example in all things and maintain good order and discipline within their ranks. The leadership structure is hierarchical with a single leader in charge of each formation. Leaders exercise dominance over their formations.

The transformed U.S. Army will not operate in traditional division, brigade or battalion formations. “Units of action” and “units of employment” that deploy will be of varying sizes.<sup>10</sup> Soldiers will be asked to work in multiple military occupational specialties and to form teams to meet the demands of a wide variety of missions. At the lowest levels, soldiers may be called upon to make decisions that may have strategic implications.<sup>11</sup> The transformed U.S. Army will be information-centric. Information will be shared with soldiers at all levels to insure a common operating picture throughout the formation. Highly skilled soldiers may often have greater technical expertise regarding the equipment they operate than the commanders of their unit. Soldiers will require access to greater amounts of information to accomplish the mission and may have greater access to that information than their leaders.<sup>12</sup> Leaders will need to share information with their soldiers, to listen to their soldiers and to rely more on their soldiers’ input when making decisions. This will require a more interactive leadership style.

Leadership must also focus on how best to lead soldiers through a period of change and uncertainty, how to encourage the best and the brightest to participate in the organization and how to insure the vitality of the organization in the future.<sup>13</sup> This will require Army leaders to re-examine how they lead. This change will require “transformational leadership.” Transformational leadership focuses on interactive behaviors. It requires leaders to know their subordinates on a more personal level. Transformational leaders build consensus among their subordinates and encourage the

exchange of ideas when solving problems.<sup>14</sup> Transformational leaders can lead soldiers who possess greater technical expertise and perhaps even greater academic qualifications without losing credibility as a leader. Transformational leaders rely on experts within their organization to help strengthen the organization. Transformational leadership encourages participation and works to enhance soldier contributions to the organization.<sup>15</sup> It is inclusive and provides a model for leading independent people in a world of rapid change.<sup>16</sup>

As the U.S. Army transforms, the traditional hierarchical leadership style must be supplemented with a transformational leadership style. The continuing all-volunteer force will come with even greater technical expertise. Those joining the ranks will have much greater access to information and will be accustomed to instant information access. At the same time, small units of action will require leaders at the lowest levels to make important decisions, often with strategic implications. This will require subordinates to have a full understanding of the mission and of how their actions fit into the overall mission. It will require soldiers who understand the importance of sharing information both vertically and horizontally to insure a common operating picture for all. It will also require leaders who know and understand their soldiers both professionally and personally.

The modern force, with its increased focus on technology, will demand soldiers with high levels expertise in particular areas and the previous leadership models that assumed the commander knew everything will no longer be relevant. Leaders simply will not be able to know everything about every piece of equipment in their control. They will

be forced to rely on the expertise on their subordinates. To do this, the interaction between the leader and the led will need to change out of necessity.

This type of transition, while much advanced in its reliance on technology, is not new to the U.S. Army. As recent as World War II, the Army experienced a transformation just as stunning but little lauded. The leaders of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), later the Women's Army Corps (WAC), led a completely new organization through a period of rapid change during World War II. While women had served with the U.S. Army in World War I, and their use as part of the U.S. Army had been considered as early as 1928, with the exception of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps they did not become a fully recognized part of the armed forces until 1942.<sup>17</sup> In 1939, as World War II loomed on the horizon, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, directed a staff study on a possible future women's corps.<sup>18</sup> The War Department anticipated a potential shortfall of manpower based on the increased industrial production in support of the war effort.<sup>19</sup> Women wanted to contribute to the war effort and could fill many jobs without any additional training.<sup>20</sup> In the summer 1941, Congresswomen Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts, with the support of the War Department and General Marshall, introduced legislation for the formation of a "Women's U.S. Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) for Service with the Army of the United States."<sup>21</sup>

General Marshall energized his staff to begin planning for a women's corps. He contacted Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, a newspaper editor, lawyer, mother of two, and active civic leader, to help work out the framework for the new organization.<sup>22</sup> Hobby was in Washington, D.C., serving as the head of the War Department's Women's Interest

Section of the Public Relations Office.<sup>23</sup> General Marshall spoke at a meeting of over twenty national women's organizations organized by Hobby.<sup>24</sup> He was impressed with her organizational skills and the knowledge and ease with which she interacted with the audience.<sup>25</sup> Based on this interaction, General Marshall believed Hobby would be a valuable asset in the establishment of a women's corps. General Marshall sent Hobby to Canada to look at how Britain and Canada used women in their armies.<sup>26</sup> Hobby became thoroughly familiar with the WAAC legislation and represented the War Department at Congressional hearings regarding the matter.<sup>27</sup> As the legislation moved through Congress, General Marshall moved Hobby into the War Department G-1 office where she provided greater assistance with the formation of the first Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.<sup>28</sup>

On 14 May 1942, *Public Law 77-554* created the WAAC. The statute gave the President authority to establish "from time to time . . . a Women's Army Auxiliary Corps for noncombatant service with the Army . . . for the purpose of making available to the national defense when needed the knowledge, skill, and special training of the women of the Nation."<sup>29</sup> The size of the Corps was to be determined by the President, but was not to exceed 150,000.<sup>30</sup> The director was to be appointed by the Secretary of War, act as an advisor to the War Department "on matters pertaining to the establishment of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps."<sup>31</sup> The director was responsible to administer and operate the corps, make recommendations as to plans and policies concerning the employment, training, supply, training, welfare, and discipline of the corps.<sup>32</sup> The legislation also provided that the women of the Corps would be of "excellent character, in

good physical health between the ages of twenty-one and forty-five and citizens of the United States.”<sup>33</sup>

In July 1943, the WAAC became the Women’s Army Corps (WAC), and women were in the Army, not a mere auxiliary to the Army.<sup>34</sup> By war’s end, the women who had volunteered for this new organization had served in 274 different Army military occupational specialties.<sup>35</sup> At no time since have women participated in so many varied aspects of the military experience. They were cryptographers, typists, communication specialists, mechanics, drivers, and postal workers. While the incorporation of women as part of the Army was not purely technologically focused, it did involve leading a newly-established, all-volunteer force during a period of great turmoil, without a clear historical example of what such an organization should look like. The WAAC was a completely new concept for the U.S. Army. The organization was a great experiment that depended on sound leadership for its success. The female leaders of the WAAC/WAC built a cohesive organization from an all-volunteer force in a very short time. As the WAAC/WAC grew, the leaders experienced acquisition difficulties, grew and developed their own doctrine, and trained a force to participate in a world war with soldiers not previously considered for employment in the active Army.

The leaders of the WAAC did not rely exclusively on the traditional U.S. Army leadership style. They used a leadership style and method that encouraged participation; it was based on knowing and understanding their subordinates, communicating with them, respecting the individuals in the unit, and dealing justly with all persons.<sup>36</sup> It required some of the traditional leadership traits, such as setting the example and understanding the duties of their subordinates, but understanding the individuals whom

they led and forming a cohesive team was emphasized. They assured the soldiers in their command of their importance to the mission and worked toward interdependence of all soldiers within their units. This style represents an untapped resource of valuable inspiration on how to lead an all-volunteer force during a period of rapid change.

During World War II, the Infantry Officer Candidate School curriculum taught directive leadership. The leadership training focused on technical competency in areas, such as how to lead patrols, conduct night movements, and weapons maintenance.<sup>37</sup> Leadership equated to technical and tactical competency with little instruction on how to interact with subordinates.<sup>38</sup> This leadership style was not appropriate for the newly established WAAC. The WAAC wrote its own leadership guide to address its particular leadership requirements.

*The WAC Officer: A Guide to Successful Leadership* provided a no-nonsense approach to leading soldiers, emphasizing the importance of inclusion, participation, and individuality while building teams within a military environment.<sup>39</sup> These characteristics were intended to be included in the military directive leadership style and did not completely replace it. However, these added attributes proved effective for the leaders of the WAAC/WAC and distinguished the WAAC/WAC leaders from their male counterparts.

This thesis suggests that the leadership of the WAAC/WAC warrants study as a historical example of transformational leadership. This leadership style provided the foundation for the all-volunteer force these women led, and when viewed against the backdrop of World War II, it provides a window to study transformational leadership and examples of transformational leadership in action.

### Thesis Question

The primary question this research will seek to answer is: Are the leadership qualities displayed by the female officer in the WAAC/WAC during World War II applicable to today's leaders in an all-volunteer, transforming U.S. Army? Inherent in this question is, What were the leadership qualities and experiences of the WAAC/WAC officers in World War II and are these qualities and experiences indicative of a relevant, transformational leadership style? The thesis is organized into six chapters; chapter 1, the introduction; chapter 2 provides the broad historical overview of the impetus for a women's corps; chapter 3 looks at the first WAAC/WAC leader, Director Oveta Culp Hobby; chapter 4 explores the leadership examples of two of Hobby's lieutenants, Major Anna Wilson and Major Charity Adams; chapter 5 discusses the leadership doctrine the women of the WAAC/WAC developed, the application of those leadership techniques, the modern definitions of leadership and transformation, and how these are relevant today; and chapter 6 asserts the values of these leadership styles in a transforming army.

### Limitations

This thesis will provide a historical overview of how female officers led during a tumultuous time and of how they dealt with an ever-evolving organization during that time. It will focus on how their leadership styles contributed to the success of the WAAC/WAC and the specific units they led. It assumes that there were specific leadership styles exercised by the WAAC/WAC officers, that these styles can be identified and quantified, and that these styles are more a function of organizational structure and mission and are gender neutral.

This thesis is limited to an evaluation of the WAAC/WAC between 1942 and 1945. It does not look at the contributions of WAC leaders following World War II. It does not look at the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, the U.S. Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), the U.S. Army Air Corps WASP (Women Air Service Pilots), or U.S. Coast Guard SPARS (Coast Guard Women's Reserve, the acronym is taken from the Coast Guard motto "Semper Paratus, Always Ready"). It focuses on the WAAC/WAC experience in the European Theater and does not consider the WAAC/WAC experience in the Pacific Theater. Additionally, this thesis looks at specific examples of officer leadership and does not address noncommissioned officer leadership or contributions. There are no additional limitations on this research.

This thesis will not look at expanding the role of women in the U.S. Army. It will not explore sexual harassment or equal opportunity, except as it relates, if at all, to the experiences of the WAAC/WACs during 1942-1945. It will provide a historic overview of how women led during a turbulent time, and it will address their leadership contributions. It will also look at how they dealt with an ever-changing organization during that short period of time and how their leadership style contributed to their individual success and to the success of the WAAC/WAC in the enormous, wartime Army, dominated and staffed by males.

#### Research Sources

*The U.S. Army in World War II Special Study Series, The Women's Army Corps*, provided the most definitive research tool for this project. Written by Mattie E. Treadwell, it is the authoritative work on the Women's Army Corps from its formation to the end of World War II. However, it does not directly address the leadership traits of the

first WAAC/WAC leaders. The many autobiographies from the women who served during this era likewise do not provide much discussion of the leadership traits of the women who led the WAAC/WAC. The Women's Army Museum at Fort Lee, Virginia, and the Women in Military Service Museum in Washington, D.C., have archival materials from the women who led the WAAC/WAC and are a resource for additional primary research materials. The author spoke with two former WACs and their recollections of their experiences provided a rich insight into the organization during the war years. In the last twenty years, many autobiographies and oral histories were taken to preserve the WAAC/WAC history. As the number of living World War II WAAC/WAC members continues to decrease, there may be limits on this type study in the future.

This thesis will provide U.S. Army leaders with another leadership style to aid them in leading today's soldiers during a time of transformation. It will provide soldiers with additional role models. It will give female soldiers, in particular, examples of successful women leaders for them to emulate. It will look at leadership in action; leadership that constantly adapted to the information it received on how the organization was operating; leadership that shaped its own future by seeing the need for change, not for the sake of change, but to improve the organization; leadership that pursued that change with zeal and fervor; leadership that was willing to admit mistakes and rapidly seek to overcome them; and leadership that truly cared about the soldiers and the mission.

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<sup>1</sup>General Eric K. Shinseki, "CSA Keynote Address" (AUSA Eisenhower Luncheon, 17 October 2000); available from <http://www.army.mil/csa/speeches.htm>; Internet.

<sup>2</sup>General Eric K. Shinseki, "Address to the Eisenhower Luncheon, 45th Annual Meeting of the Association of the United States Army" (as prepared for presentation 12 October 1999); available from <http://www.army.mil/csa/speeches.htm>; Internet.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Frank Tiboni, Defense News, 24 February 2003, interview with LTG James Riley, Commanding General, Fort Leavenworth and the Combined Arms Center, available from <https://us.army.mil/attach/Lt.%20Gen.%20James%20Riley.htm>; Internet.

<sup>6</sup>Shinseki, 17 October 2000.

<sup>7</sup>Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership, Be, Know, Do* (Washington, DC: 31 August 1999), Preface, ix.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 1-3.

<sup>10</sup>A unit of action is the smallest tactical unit in the objective force. See generally, “Transforming to the Objective Force” A Symposium of the Association of the United States U.S. Army, 8-9 November 2001. Units of Employment (UE), typically division- and corps-like elements, are highly tailorable, higher-level echelons that integrate and synchronize Army forces for full-spectrum operations at the higher tactical and operational levels of war/conflict; available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/ue.htm>; Internet.

<sup>11</sup>Jeffery D. McCausland and Gregg F. Martin, “Transforming Strategic Leader Education for the 21st-Century U.S. Army,” 2001 [article on-line]; available from <http://carlislewww.U.S.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/01autumn/Mccausla.htm>; Internet.

<sup>12</sup>Information-centric technology will require not just the collection and sharing of information, but also the filtering of information too. Individual soldiers may have greater access to raw information that they must in turn provide to their leaders in a more usable form. Often their leaders may never see the same raw information or have access to the equipment used to collect that information.

<sup>13</sup>General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the Army, and Thomas White, Secretary of the Army, “Transformation Roadmap,” *date*, p. 5; available from [http://www.army.mil/vision/Transformation\\_Roadmap.pdf](http://www.army.mil/vision/Transformation_Roadmap.pdf); Internet *is this an article--quotation marks--or document--italics.*

<sup>14</sup>See generally, FM 22-100, 3:77-78.

<sup>15</sup>Dr. Lorraine R. Matusak, “*Leadership: Gender Related, Not Gender Specific,*” *Concepts, Challenges, and Realities of Leadership: An International Perspective*, Selected proceedings from the Salzburg Seminar on International Leadership, ed. James MacGregor Burns, Georgia Sorenson, and Lorraine Matusak, *date*, paragraph 12;

available from <http://www.academy.umd.edu/scholarship/casl/salzburg/chapter3.htm>;  
Internet.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., para. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Mattie E. Treadwell, *The Women's Army Corps, U.S. Army in World War II, Special Studies* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1954; reprint, **city, state: publisher**1968) (page citations are to the reprint edition), 13.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid. General Marshall recognized that women could be used as telephone operators and typists to replace men. These jobs were filled predominately by women in the civilian sector. Men who were trained to full these jobs performed poorly in spite of the superior equipment available to them.

<sup>21</sup>HR 4906, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 28 May 1941.

<sup>22</sup>Treadwell, 21.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 32-33. In March 1942, Hobby visited the leaders of the Canadian WAC, the Women's Division, Royal Canadian Air Force, and British women officers who were visiting Canada.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>29</sup>*Public Law 77-554, need rest of info.*

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>The WAAC became an integral part of the United States Army on 30 September 1943, pursuant to *Public Law 78-110*, enacted on 1 July 1943. The Corps was not part of the Army, but their charter was scheduled to expire six months following the war. The Act provided, “There is hereby established in the Army of the United States, for the period of the present war and for six months thereafter or for such shorter period as the Congress by concurrent resolution or the President by proclamation shall proscribe, a component to be known as the ‘Women’s Army Corps’.”).

<sup>35</sup>Treadwell, 559. By the summer of 1943, enlisted women worked in 155 military occupational specialties; by early 1944, in 239; by May 1944, in 274. No final count was ever reported.

<sup>36</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *The WAC Officer: A Guide to Successful Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944; reprint, Washington, DC: War Department, February 1945) (hereafter cited as *WAC Officer Guide*).

<sup>37</sup>*Author?* *U.S. Army and Navy Register* (Washington DC: U.S. Army and Navy Publishing Company, Inc., 29 July 1944).

<sup>38</sup>*Author?* *Leadership, How to use the Rating Scale* (Fort Benning, GA: The Infantry School. 1944).

<sup>39</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *WAC Officer Guide*.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The seeds of the WAAC/WAC were planted in World War I. One of the first proposals for women service members came from the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in France in 1917.<sup>1</sup> General Pershing requested one hundred French-speaking women to work as telephone operators and recommended that they be uniformed.<sup>2</sup> One hundred women were sent as civilian contractors with privileges similar to those of U.S. Army nurses, but not as military members.<sup>3</sup> Women also served during World War I with the Quartermaster General, the Ordnance Department, and the Medical Corps as contractors; but none had military status.<sup>4</sup>

Reports following World War I noted no deficiencies in the performance of women sent to serve, but did note the lack of orderly administration and the absence of any Army control over the various volunteer groups in theater.<sup>5</sup> Women accompanying the force were not the only women present on the battlefield during World War I. Many welfare groups supporting the war effort also sent women to Europe, which further complicated the administration of women serving with the military. The U.S. Army lacked the ability to coordinate these volunteer groups, which in some cases resulted in redundancy of effort.

The British Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, however, provided a fine example of how to use and administer a women's military organization. Their services proved so exemplary that the U.S. Army borrowed services from the British Women's Auxiliary when the need for personnel with clerical skills became desperately short.<sup>6</sup>

In 1918, following a request from the AEF for 5,000 women to fill clerical positions currently filled by enlisted men, which also recommended that the women be members of the U.S. Army Service Corps, the War Department responded by changing the draft age and sending 5,000 men to fill the necessary positions.<sup>7</sup> Stateside units also requested women to help with clerical work. There were not enough men to fill these positions, and commanders desperately needed them filled. The War Department did authorize the civilian employment of women, “in essential work for which men employees cannot be obtained,” but only those women of “mature age and high moral character” were hired.<sup>8</sup> Even with this concession, the U.S. Army could not fill all its vacant administrative positions. Several U.S. Army departments, both in Washington, D.C., and in the field, realized that a women’s corps under military control might be the solution to the manpower shortage.<sup>9</sup> Before a final decision could be made about using women, however, the war ended and so did much of the debate.

The enfranchisement of women helped to continue the debate about their participation in the military.<sup>10</sup> Many thought women tended to be pacifist and potential advocates for the complete abolition of the military.<sup>11</sup> Women had been the core constituency of the peace movement in World War I. To counter this trend, in 1920, the War Department established the position of Director of Women’s Relations as a part of the G-1 Division of the General Staff.<sup>12</sup> The director would act as a liaison between the War Department and the various women’s groups throughout the country, to secure their cooperation and support for the U.S. Army.<sup>13</sup> The message for the women of America was that the U.S. Army was “a progressive, socially minded human institution” that women voters should support.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, the first director resigned after a year because of what many believed was the general lack of support given to her.<sup>15</sup> The second appointee, Miss Anita Phipps, spent a decade fighting to determine the scope of her position: Was she the supervisor of the thirty leaders of various largest national women's groups or was her position intended to be the planner and chief of the future women's U.S. Army corps?<sup>16</sup> Without military status, Miss Phipps lacked credibility with the various women's groups, particularly when she shared the podium with U.S. Army and Navy nurses.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the military leaders, when speaking to women's groups, ignored the carefully prepared fact sheets prepared by Miss Phipps, her staff studies were shelved without review or comment, and she was often told that her office would be abolished because the men of the War Department were quite capable of planning for the future use of women.<sup>18</sup>

In 1931 Miss Phipps left her position as the director of Women's Relations.<sup>19</sup> She left discouraged and in ill health following the decree of the new Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur, that Miss Phipps's duties were of no military value.<sup>20</sup> She left behind the first complete, workable plan for a women's corps, including all the evidence of women's utilization and contributions during World War I and the opinions of the British military, Congress and various U.S. Army commands, and her recommendation that women be in the U.S. Army and not assigned as an auxiliary to the U.S. Army.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, in 1928, Major Everett S. Hughes of G-1 Division, Army General Staff, had been appointed to plan a Women's Army Corps.<sup>22</sup> Major Hughes posited that women would likely participate in the next major conflict, and the extent of their participation would depend on how close the conflict was to total war. He envisioned the

creation of a women's corps immediately, to insure women understood how the U.S. Army worked and thought. Major Hughes believed that the details of how women would ultimately be employed could be sorted out when they were actually needed. He reasoned that having a pool of women to draw on who understood how the U.S. Army functioned was the first important step in utilizing women and would insure that the men of the U.S. Army understood that women were part of the force.<sup>23</sup> Major Hughes proposed that women should be included in the U.S. Army the same as men, with a similar uniform and privileges to avoid any confusion about their status. His plan was sent to the Chief of Staff, General Charles Summerall, in 1928 and again in 1930. It was the G-1, Brigadier General Albert J. Bowley, who in 1930 recommended an immediate education campaign for U.S. Army officers to insure their full cooperation when women entered the U.S. Army.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, Major Hughes's plan and Brigadier General Bowley's recommendations remained on the shelf, not to be looked at again until after the WAAC was formed.<sup>25</sup>

Just one month after becoming the U.S. Army Chief of Staff in 1939, General George C. Marshall directed a staff study for the use of women in the military.<sup>26</sup> With the initiation of the draft in 1940, women increased their demands for an opportunity to serve in the nation's defense and began organizing their own defense agencies.<sup>27</sup> Members of the War Department began to express concern about women showing up in theater to help without some means of controlling their activities recalling their experience in World War I.<sup>28</sup> The United States also saw conflict erupting throughout Europe, and the possibility of a world war involving the United States loomed on the horizon. The U.S. hoped for a rapid resolution of the conflict in Europe and preferred to supply war materiel

and weapons to the Allies rather than U.S. military forces. The Battle of France, however, was rapidly resolved in Hitler's favor, and in September 1940, President Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Act, instituting a draft of male citizens.<sup>29</sup> The thought of using women as a part of the U.S. military was becoming more viable within the War Department.

In the spring of 1941, Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers from Massachusetts contacted General George C. Marshall and informed him of her intentions to introduce legislation for the formation of a women's corps.<sup>30</sup> General Marshall asked for a week to consider the proposal and then for a month more.<sup>31</sup> Mrs. Rogers persisted. The War Department reviewed her proposal and recommended moving slowly with any plans for a new department.<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Rogers continued to drive for women's involvement and on 28 May 1941 introduced her bill in the House of Representatives for the formation of a women's corps. By this time General Marshall had also expressed his desire to "explore every possible contingency" with regard to meeting manpower requirements including the use of women.<sup>33</sup> In February 1942 as the bill bumped along in Congress, General Marshall wrote to Congressman John W. McCormack, the majority leader in the House of Representatives, urging Congressman McCormack to support the passage of the WAAC legislation. General Marshall commented, "Women certainly must be employed in the 'over-all' effort of this nation, and for the activities indicated in the draft of the law proposed to Congress we consider it essential that their status, their relationship to military authority, should be clearly established."<sup>34</sup> In May 1942 the legislation passed and the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was born. The organization, however, would

need a parent who could nurture it to maturity. It would find such a parent in the person of Oveta Culp Hobby.

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<sup>1</sup>Treadwell, 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. The women serving in the Medical Corps were in addition to U.S. Army Nurses.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 32-33. The British women would serve again in World War II and were drafted in England to help meet the manpower shortage.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>10</sup>The Nineteenth Amendment gave women the right to vote. It became law on 26 August 1920, when Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the amendment.

<sup>11</sup>Treadwell, 10.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 13. One of the reasons the women's corps was quashed was the opinion of men like Brigadier General Campbell King, Assistant G-1, who believed that the goal of Miss Phipps was to perfect within the Army an organization of women, headed by a woman, with a hierarchy of subheads plus influential civilian advisors, which would constitute "a powerful machine difficult to control and endowed with possibilities of hampering and embarrassing the War Department." Oveta Hobby, the first director of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was clearly aware of such opinions when she led the WAAC.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 14. Hughes did not believe that all women should be militarized, only those who would be serving overseas.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 14, fn 43. Ironically, Hobby visited England in 1943 and met Major General Everett Hughes, who demanded to know about how his plan was being used. This was the first Hobby knew of the previous plan. At the time of Hobby's visit, the WAAC was an auxiliary to the Army and a separate organization with a separate rank structure, all of which Hughes has warned against.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 16. In Chicago, 17,000 women formed the Women's League of Defense as an agency of "women who can do anything helpful to replace a man in the event of war." In Los Angeles, the Women's Ambulance and Defense Corps trained women in military skills and in Pittsburgh, the Memorial Gold Cross First Aid and Ambulance Corps was formed.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, 16 September 1940, CH. 720, 54 STAT. 885. The act provided that not more than 900,000 men were to be in training at any one time, and it limited service to 12 months--later (1941) extended to 18 months. After the United States entered World War II, a new selective service act made men between 18 and 45 liable for military service and required all men between 18 and 65 to register. The terminal point of service was extended to six months after the war. From 1940 until 1947--when the wartime selective service act expired after extensions by Congress--over 10,000,000 men were inducted. Available from <http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/history/A0844347.html>; Internet.

<sup>30</sup>Treadwell, 17.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 16, 20. General Marshall did not see an immediate need for a women's corps in the summer of 1941, but he wanted a pool to draw from should the need present itself.

<sup>34</sup>Larry I. Bland and Sharon Ritenour Stevens, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, vol. 3, *The Right Man for the Job* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 31May, 1943), 99.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE DIRECTOR, OVETA CULP HOBBY

Oveta Culp Hobby was born in 1905 to Isaac William “Ike” and Emma Culp in Killeen, Texas.<sup>1</sup> She was the second of seven children.<sup>2</sup> Her father was a lawyer and legislator. In 1919, Ike Culp was elected to the Texas legislature and his fourteen-year-old daughter traveled with him to Austin, the state capital.<sup>3</sup> There she was an avid observer of the legislative process, attending each day’s sessions. Despite missing school to watch the workings of government, Oveta graduated in the top of her class at Temple High School.<sup>4</sup> She attended Mary Hardin Baylor University, in Belton, Texas, for a year and then rejoined her father in Austin.<sup>5</sup> In 1925, at age twenty, she was asked by the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives to act as legislative parliamentarian, which she did for six years.<sup>6</sup> While working as the parliamentarian, Hobby also studied law at the University of Texas.<sup>7</sup> During this time Hobby was active in politics, codifying the Texas banking laws, serving as a clerk on the legislature’s judiciary committee, helping with the National Democratic Convention held in Houston in 1928, working on Thomas Conally’s campaign for the United States Senate and a Houston mayoral campaign.<sup>8</sup>

Hobby also served as an assistant city attorney for Houston and at age twenty-five ran for the state legislature, but lost. In 1931 she married former Texas governor William Pettus Hobby, the president the Houston *Post Dispatch* and friend of Oveta’s father.<sup>9</sup> Hobby then began learning the newspaper publishing business. She wrote editorials, served as the assistant editor, and as the executive vice president. Her work was not

confined to the newspaper; however; Hobby was also active as the president of the League of Women Voters in Texas, as a board member of the Museum of Fine Arts, and as a member of the Houston Symphony Orchestra Committee and the Junior League.<sup>10</sup> In 1935 she was appointed as the only woman on the citizens committee to plan a flood control program for Houston.<sup>11</sup> Known for her grace under pressure, Hobby pulled her husband from a burning airplane they had been flying in after it crashed and stayed with him until rescue worker arrived. The rescue crew had no idea that Hobby had been a passenger too because of her calm demeanor.<sup>12</sup>

Hobby came to Washington, D.C., in June 1941 on Federal Communications Commission business. She received a call from Major General David Surles, head of the War Department Bureau of Public Relations, asking her to organize a section in the War Department on Women's Activities.<sup>13</sup> Hobby refused, explaining that her work and family were in Houston, Texas, and travel between Houston and Washington would be too time consuming.<sup>14</sup> Not discouraged by her initial refusal, General Surles asked Hobby if she would draw up an organizational chart for a women's activities section and recommend ways women could serve.<sup>15</sup> She agreed and went to Washington, D.C., intending to stay just long enough to set up the women's activities office and see that it was properly functioning: four months.<sup>16</sup> Hobby explained that she could not be away from her husband, children, and job any longer than that.<sup>17</sup> She stayed, however, for almost a year and was then selected to head the WAAC.

While she worked in the Women's Interest Section, General Marshall asked Hobby to help the G-1 with public relations relating to the WAAC.<sup>18</sup> As a result, Hobby became very familiar with the WAAC legislation. She became the only female to

represent the War Department in negotiations with the Budget Office over finance issues relating to the future WAAC and later appeared before congressional hearings on the WAAC.<sup>19</sup>

General Marshall also asked her to provide a list of names of potential directors to the new branch.<sup>20</sup> After reviewing Hobby's list of nine, Marshall told her he wanted her to head the new Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.<sup>21</sup> Hobby initially said she could not accept the position. Her husband, however, said she could accept it and she did.<sup>22</sup> The preplanners were already at work on plans for the Corps. They had developed many of the initial plans, but they needed someone to pull all the plans together.<sup>23</sup> Hobby provided that leadership.

Hobby, then thirty-seven, knew how to run a business and organize people. Her business experience as the assistant editor of the *Houston Dispatch* and her vast experience in the Texas legislature schooled her in the operations of a bureaucracy. Hobby also knew how to work with men. Her employment experiences were all in a male-dominated environment. She moved comfortably in this circle. The time she spent with her father as a young girl, following him to Austin and watching the daily workings of the legislature, prepared her for the task she embarked on, even though she did not realize how qualified she was for the job.

Hobby had additional qualifications that everyone involved with the WAAC believed were important; she was not affiliated with any particular interest group.<sup>24</sup> All who knew Hobby described her as energetic and sincere and observed she could be both diplomatic and doggedly determined in pursuing issues she believed in.<sup>25</sup> General Marshall in recommending Hobby as Director of the WAAC said, "In all . . . duties she

displayed sound judgment and carried out her mission in a manner to be expected of a highly trained staff officer. She has won the complete confidence of the members of the War Department staff with whom she has come into contact, and she made a most favorable impression before the Committee of Congress.<sup>26</sup>

In February 1942, when the War Department seemed to be sitting on the WAAC legislation, General Marshall took it upon himself to move Hobby from her office in the Public Relations Branch to the WAAC Preplanning section of the G-1 section.<sup>27</sup> There her staff consisted of a cavalry lieutenant colonel (LTC) previously retired for disability, LTC Harold P. Tasker, and a civilian assistant.<sup>28</sup> With LTC Tasker came two lieutenants, called from the reserves with no prior active duty service.<sup>29</sup> Hobby relied on her military assistants as her position as director was tenuous at best. The actual authority for her position and the Corps were still three months from passage. Even after the legislation passed, her position remained tentative. The bill creating the WAAC made Hobby an advisor to the War Department, not a member of the department.<sup>30</sup> Originally organized to allow the WAAC direct access to the Chief of Staff, the reorganization of the War Department in March 1942 moved the WAAC preplanners to the Personnel Division of Services and Supply.<sup>31</sup> General Marshall, however, directed Hobby to come to him directly if she had any difficulty that she could not iron out herself. Hobby rarely used this chit, fully realizing the importance of a chain of command and her need to work within it.

In March 1942, General Marshall asked Hobby to look at the British and Canadian models of women's use in the military and to prepare a plan for the use of women in the U.S. Army.<sup>32</sup> Hobby and LTC Tasker traveled to Canada to meet with

Canadian officers and commanders and discuss the use of women in the army.<sup>33</sup> They also visited with British leaders in Canada during their visit. Hobby noted many of the difficulties the British and Canadians had experienced in the development of their women's services: gossip and false rumors about the character of the women serving, apprehension from male officers about the value of women in the service, shortages of uniforms, inadequate housing for women, and the importance of status in the military rather than as an auxiliary force.<sup>34</sup> Hobby immediately advocated for an amendment to the pending WAAC legislation to change the status of the new corps from an auxiliary to full members of the Army.<sup>35</sup> She learned from the Canadian example that there were fewer problems associated with the administration of the women's division that was in the force.<sup>36</sup> Being a part of the force, rather than an auxiliary, eliminated the need for completely separate chains of command, separate regulations, and a separate rank structure.<sup>37</sup> Hobby's recommendation did receive consideration by the congressional committee reviewing the WAAC legislation, but it would be another year before women would be allowed full membership in the Army.

In anticipation of the passage of the WAAC legislation, the preplanners prepared for the first batch of women volunteers. They prepared training curriculum, screening criteria for admission of both officer and enlisted women, and a recruiting campaign. Hobby insisted that the impartial U.S. Army recruiting process be used to select the women for the WAAC.<sup>38</sup> Hobby also insisted on no direct commissions for the first women.<sup>39</sup> Rather, all must agree to enlist and then officer candidates would be selected from the basic training course. Hobby received many requests for direct commissions from Congressmen, Army leaders, and public officials.<sup>40</sup> Even Mrs. Rogers, chief

sponsor of the WAAC legislation, encouraged Hobby to commission several women into senior positions early.<sup>41</sup> Hobby steadfastly refused. She believed allowing direct commissions early in the Corps history would be a policy that could not be turned off later. She chose to have no direct commissionees and stood by that policy throughout her tenure.<sup>42</sup>

The officers of the WAAC were just one issue with which Hobby dealt. She planned to have the first officer class selected and at school forty-seven days after the passage of the WAAC bill.<sup>43</sup> After the initial decisions about selection criteria for admission to the WAAC was decided, the planners needed a place to house and train these women. Colleges were considered, but most were already actively supporting the military with training programs on their campuses.<sup>44</sup> There were no military facilities available, as all were being used to house and train men. In late April 1942, Fort Des Moines, Iowa, was selected as the future home for the WAAC.<sup>45</sup> Fort Des Moines formerly housed the Cavalry and had the capacity to house 5,000 soldiers. The buildings were sturdy brick and nine former stables could be converted to barracks if needed. There were no other major defense projects in the area, and Fort Des Moines was centrally located in the American heartland.<sup>46</sup>

Once barracks were selected and training materials developed, there were still uniforms to design and procure. There were many opinions on what the WAAC uniform should look like. Colonel Letcher O. Grice of the Standardization Branch was tasked by The Quartermaster General to procure the WAAC uniforms.<sup>47</sup> Grice believed, based on the language of the legislation, that the uniform must be “distinctive,” that they should not be the same color as the male uniforms and recommended blue uniforms.<sup>48</sup> Hobby,

however, had her own idea on what the uniform should look like. She announced the WAAC uniform would be identical in color to that of the rest of U.S. Army and as close in design as possible.<sup>49</sup> Well-known designers were consulted and the final product consisted of a straight skirt with shirt and tie.<sup>50</sup>

There were also regulations to consider. The WAAC was not part of the Army, so Army regulations generally did not apply. When Hobby arrived at the preplanning cell, most of the regulations were already written and ready for publication.<sup>51</sup> Hobby immediately recognized that regulations relating to the discipline or discharge would need to be changed to allow such actions to be handled at her level to prevent a company commander from serving as an accuser and judge.<sup>52</sup>

The WAAC headquarters, in an exercise of its command prerogative, would retain control of all WAACs in the field.<sup>53</sup> While the women would work for various units, they would remain assigned to the WAAC and a WAAC company at their location. The plan called for women to be assigned in groups of not less than fifty, to insure that inspections and supply would not be unduly difficult. Women were only to be assigned to locations where LTC Tasker, one of the WAAC planners, inspected the barracks.<sup>54</sup>

This conservative approach to the proposed assignment of WAACs raised many questions. The G-3 believed that women should be assigned to the gaining units and subjected to the same discipline as their male counterparts.<sup>55</sup> However, because the legislation proposed an auxiliary, not actual membership in the U.S. Army, the same rules could not be applied to the new WAACs. They required their own rules and regulations. As the confusion grew between the Army planners and the WAAC planners, Hobby was able to gain the support of the G-3 and others for the proposition that women

be included in the U.S. Army and not as an auxiliary to the U.S. Army.<sup>56</sup> This support did not result in any initial change to the bill waiting approval, but did prove Hobby worthy of her position as the director.

Having laid the groundwork, the legislation creating the WAAC finally passed on 14 May 1942. On 15 May the President signed it and on the next day Hobby was sworn in as first Director of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.<sup>57</sup> Her appointment was no surprise to General Marshall as he had recommended Hobby to the Secretary of War General Stimson, in March 1942.<sup>58</sup> In his dealing with Hobby, Marshall found that she "displayed sound judgment and carried our mission in a manner to be expected of a highly trained staff officer."<sup>59</sup> Based on the recommendation of General Marshall, General Stimson approved the recommendation and forwarded it to the President the same day.<sup>60</sup> However, until the legislation was passed, no action could be taken on the appointment of a director. On the day before the WAAC legislation passed, a member of the general staff was sent to General Stimson's home with the letter of appointment for Hobby.<sup>61</sup> The Army was greatly concerned about possible competition for the directorship of the WAAC and wanted to insure an individual well acquainted with the history of the WAAC be appointed. Stimson agreed and signed the appointment.<sup>62</sup> Thus, Hobby was designated as the Director of the WAAC the same day the President signed the bill.

Hobby's appointment caused a whirlwind of press coverage. Hobby, having worked with the press both in her position in the Women's Interest Section and as the assistant editor of the *Houston Dispatch* prepared herself for that first press conference. She and her public relations consultant spent most of the night before trying to list every

possible embarrassing question Hobby might be asked and developing appropriate responses.<sup>63</sup> The emphasis had to be placed on the value of the Corps and not on frivolous matters, such as the whether girdles would be issued to the new WAACs.<sup>64</sup> Hobby's performance was characterized as "very direct, forthright, composed and candid."<sup>65</sup> Hobby weathered the first press conference like a true professional.

Hobby immediately set about the work of running the Corps. In less than two months, the first women were to arrive at Fort Des Moines to begin their basic training. Previous tentative regulations were published, uniforms were procured, and billets renovated. Hobby was keenly aware of the importance of those first sixty days. General Hilldring, the G-1, had commented, "This whole thing stands or falls in the next 60 days."<sup>66</sup>

Hobby met with female black leaders to develop a plan for the recruitment of black women. By congressional mandate, the WAAC was the only service initially to allow black women to enlist or become officers.<sup>67</sup> Although Hobby had declared her support for this provision of the bill, the NAACP and the National Council of Negro Women (NCWN) opposed the appointment of Hobby as the Director of the WAAC, because she was a "Southern woman."<sup>68</sup> Hobby countered this opposition by selecting Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, founder of the National Council of Negro Women, to assist in developing a campaign to recruit black women and help with the selection of the black officer candidates.<sup>69</sup> This team approach served the WAAC well. Dr. Bethune actively recruited black women, wrote articles encouraging black women to join the WAAC, and visited black WAACs often.<sup>70</sup> Hobby walked a fine line between insuring the full participation of black women within the Corps while also insuring the U.S. Army policies

regarding segregation were not violated. While the issue of segregation would not be eliminated during World War II, the positive interaction between Hobby and women like Dr. Bethune helped to reduce its impact within the WAAC and insured the active participation of black women.

### Recruiting Women

Hobby was keenly aware of the importance of packaging the WAAC/WAC properly to gain maximum acceptance by both the civilian and military world. She worked hard to portray women as feminine and soldierly.<sup>71</sup> Hobby sought respected women to express their support of the WAAC, she tried to limit recruiting to campaigns that emphasized women's sense of patriotism rather than the new freedoms that would be available to women soldiers, and she engaged major religious organizations to gain their support for the WAAC.<sup>72</sup> All these actions proved extremely helpful in insuring the WAAC was portrayed as a respectable and worthy organization. She encouraged women's groups to think of the WAAC as "the best of American womanhood."<sup>73</sup> She was not afraid to create a female soldier, an entity separate from her male counterpart. This was critical to the success of the WAAC during the war. Hobby sought to portray women's involvement in the WAAC not as glamorous, but as selfless service in support of the nation.<sup>74</sup> Participation in the WAAC/WAC was promoted as a means of protecting family and home, rather than a means of destroying these when women left them.<sup>75</sup> Hobby told the first class of women at Fort Des Moines that they had a "debt to democracy and a date with destiny."<sup>76</sup>

To help insure this positive image, the recruiting standards for women were higher than those for men. Women applied for acceptance in the WAAC. Thirty thousand

women applied for the first 400 available positions.<sup>77</sup> Their applications were reviewed at the men's Army recruiting station, and those who were not otherwise disqualified were given an aptitude test.<sup>78</sup> An interview board composed of two women and an Army officer then screened those who passed the aptitude test.<sup>79</sup> The women on the board were selected from the local area and were to be "personnel directors, business executives, YWCA supervisors and women of like standing."<sup>80</sup> Women were then medically screened and interviewed again. The interviewers were women selected by Hobby to act as her representative.<sup>81</sup> They included Dean Dorothy C. Stratton of Purdue, who later headed the SPARS, and Dean Sarah Blanding of Cornell and later president of Vassar.<sup>82</sup> The notes from these interviews and the applications were brought to Washington, D.C., and reviewed by the eleven psychiatrists looking for any indication of unsuitability.<sup>83</sup> Finally, a board selected 360 of the best applicants.<sup>84</sup> These women would form the core of the WAAC, serving as the trainers, instructors, and leaders of the Corps immediately after completing their basic training. Of the women selected, 99 percent were already employed, 90 percent had some college, most fell into the 25-to-39-year-old age group and about 20 percent were married.<sup>85</sup> This detailed screening process helped to insure a high quality of individual in the Corps. Hobby steadfastly believed that a relaxing of the standards would discourage women from joining the WAAC and would make it more difficult for women to be accepted by men.<sup>86</sup> However, in February 1943, the U.S. Army launched a massive recruiting campaign hoping to recruit 150,000 women by June 1943.<sup>87</sup>

To reach this goal, the U.S. Army Recruiting Service lowered the standards for admission of women to the WAAC. Hobby and her staff objected. Hobby had great

concern about the quality of women admitted to the Corps. She believed the success of the Corps depended on the recruitment of only the best and brightest. To do otherwise would be to jeopardize the reputation and standing of the Corps.<sup>88</sup> When she had exhausted all efforts at convincing the U.S. Army Recruiting service to return the standards to their previous level and to allow the WAAC headquarters to have responsibility for recruiting, she sought General Marshall's assistance. He concurred with Hobby and WAAC headquarters from April 1943 controlled WAAC recruiting efforts.<sup>89</sup> Hobby was careful not to approach General Marshall until she had exhausted all possible recourses. She worked closely with the various staff agencies to try and resolve this conflict, but when she believed the lower standards would adversely impact the Corps, her first concern was to prevent that. Her loyalty to the organization required her to act when all other course of action failed.

Hobby sought the establishment of War Department policies that prohibited the use of women in mess facilities, except to the extent it was necessary for them to perform kitchen duties within their units. She fought constantly to insure that women were not assigned to menial jobs, arguing that quality recruits would not be available if women were assigned primarily as cooks, waitress, and laundresses.<sup>90</sup> Hobby's commitment to the Corps and to the women serving in the Corps is evidenced by her attitude about the types of jobs women should fill. To start with the menial jobs might not have drawn the caliber of woman the Corps sought. It might have prevented women from filling the jobs they were able to fill as a result of Hobby's stance.

Hobby did not shirk from controversial matters in the Corps. She chose to address problems by developing a solution for such problems. There was much controversy

surrounding the sexual conduct of women in the Corps and the types of sexual education they were to receive.<sup>91</sup> The Army Surgeon General Norman Kirk wanted women to receive the same sexual education and venereal disease prevention instruction that male soldiers received to include access to condoms.<sup>92</sup> Hobby objected. With the support of Emily Blair, chief of the Women's Interest Section of the Public Relations Office of War Department, a job Hobby had previously held, she convinced the Army that such a program was not necessary for the WAAC/WAC because of the differences in the selection criteria for WAAC/WACs versus their male counterpart.<sup>93</sup> Both Hobby and Blair feared that such a program would "reflect an attitude toward sexual promiscuity that whatever the practice, is not held by the majority of Americans."<sup>94</sup> Instead of the original program, Hobby requested that the Surgeon General's Office prepare a course for WAAC officers on health and hygiene.<sup>95</sup> It contained medical information relating to physiology, childbearing, and menopause, along with the effects of venereal disease.<sup>96</sup> After her officers rewrote much of the pamphlet, it also contained a heavy emphasis on the moral implications of sexual promiscuity on the Corps and the individual soldier.<sup>97</sup> Prospective officers were reminded that war places many stresses on traditional standards of conduct and that soldiers of the WAAC/WAC were to be shielded from those stresses and encouraged to seek out their leaders for guidance in handling those stresses.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, applicants to the WAAC/WAC with venereal disease were not admitted to the Corps, and those who contracted it during their tenure were discharged.<sup>99</sup>

Interestingly, however, Hobby sought honorable discharges for all unmarried women who became pregnant.<sup>100</sup> The initial WAAC regulations regarding pregnancy, written before Hobby was appointed as the director, were modeled after the Army Nurse

Corps regulations that called for the dishonorable discharge of unmarried women who became pregnant.<sup>101</sup> Married women were entitled to an honorable discharge. Hobby reasoned there was no legal basis for differentiating characterization of discharge on the basis of marital status. “Other than honorable discharges” were reserved for those soldiers in violation of military law or regulations. Pregnant unmarried soldiers were not in violation of any such law or regulations. Instead, Hobby advocated that all women receive honorable discharges based on their unsuitability for further service.<sup>102</sup> While this position was met with resistance initially by married women, Hobby quelled any further discussions by asking that all married women submit to a paternity test prior to receipt of their honorable discharge to insure that their husband was in fact the father of the child.<sup>103</sup> This ended all debate on the issue. Hobby felt that separating unmarried women with a less than honorable discharge would bring unfavorable publicity to the Corps and result in victimization of the woman in civilian life.<sup>104</sup> While it can be argued that Hobby was certainly interested in preserving the reputation of the Corps through this course of conduct, it also shows a genuine concern for the women of the Corps, not just during their tenure, but after their discharge as well. Further, it shows Hobby’s desire to be even handed in her dealings with the women of the Corps. There was no need for a distinction between married and unmarried pregnant soldiers, so Hobby did not allow one.

Hobby also sought medical care for pregnant women, regardless of their marital status, after they were discharged from the Corps.<sup>105</sup> The wives of service members were eligible for prenatal and postnatal care, but WAAC/WACs were not eligible based on their own service since they were discharged when they became pregnant, making them veterans, not service members.<sup>106</sup> The Veteran’s Administration (VA) refused treatment

to these women reasoning that VA was only responsible for medical care “defect, disease, or disability” and pregnancy did not fall into any of those categories.<sup>107</sup> The War Department was reluctant to support any medical treatment for fear of the public reaction. Hobby believed the number of such incidents was low enough, so as to eliminate the need for any such concern by the War Department. Further, she feared the public reaction at finding pregnant WAAC/WACs, without a means to support themselves seeking charity for various public institutions would be worse.<sup>108</sup> Hobby, with the support of the Chief of Chaplains and the Surgeon General proposed a plan through the G-1 to the Chief of Staff, for the care of pregnant WAAC/WACs in Army hospitals.<sup>109</sup> Nine months later in May 1945, a circular was issued by the War Department authorizing treatment of pregnant WAAC/WACs in Army hospitals.<sup>110</sup> Hobby also worked with the American Red Cross to develop a program to provide prenatal care to pregnant WAAC/WACs after their discharge.<sup>111</sup> This served to insure women received the medical care they needed while waiting for the War Department to act on the issue.

While Hobby repeatedly demonstrated her care and concern for her soldiers, her leadership during a period of rapid change can be seen in her actions in dealing with training centers, command reorganization, and the functionings of her own office. The WAAC preplanners were initially part of the General Staff with direct access to the Chief of Staff, General Marshall. During the reorganization of the War Department Headquarters in March 1942, the preplanners were moved to the Services of Supply, the operating agency for the General Staff.<sup>112</sup> After the WAAC legislation was approved, the Services of Supply command contemplated where within its command the WAAC would fall.<sup>113</sup> It was decided that the WAAC Headquarters would be part of the Administrative

Services, a large subdivision of the Services of Supply.<sup>114</sup> For Hobby to get personnel matters acted upon, she now had three levels of command to navigate: the Chief of Administrative Services, the Command General of Services of Supply, and the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1. When the WAAC was converted to the WAC, Hobby's office became, Office of the Director, WAC within the G-1.<sup>115</sup> This reorganization resulted in a reduction of Hobby's staff to 25 officers and 20 civilians.<sup>116</sup> The remaining 75 officers and 46 civilians were sent to the various Army Service Forces offices.<sup>117</sup> Hobby was virtually stripped of all command functions relating to the WAC. While entitled to the rank of Colonel pursuant to the passage of the WAC legislation, she served merely as an advisor to the remainder of the Army, now responsible for the administration of the WAC. This arrangement proved so problematic that in March 1944, General Marshall directed that the WAC Director's Office be moved to the G-1. This, however, resulted in Hobby's office being further reduced to just four other officers to run the Corps.

To keep the soldiers in the field involved, Hobby was able to maintain WAC advisors with each of the major commands: the Army Ground Force, the Army Air Force, and the Army Services Forces.<sup>118</sup> Hobby made no major policy decisions without the input of the women serving with these major commands. In addition, her office insured that a monthly newsletter was sent to the field with information about policy changes and matters of general interest to the soldiers of the Corps.<sup>119</sup> Women of the Corps found this newsletter invaluable in keeping them informed about the Corps and the Army.<sup>120</sup>

Hobby was in constant demand in Congress to provide information about the Corps and its budget and to answer questions about its workings.<sup>121</sup> The novelty of the WAC demanded that she and she alone appear to provide information about the Corps.

She also maintained constant liaison with the other service branch directors. As the first women's branch, the other services relied heavily on the successes of the WAC and tried to avoid the mistakes. All the directors shared information freely and the other services often adopted Army WAC policies verbatim. Hobby also worked closely to maintain liaison with many civic groups interested in the workings of the WAC, answered personal mail from citizens and soldier concerning the WAC, and provided information and assistance to Allied armies interested in forming female branches in their service.<sup>122</sup>

After the first WAAC training center was up and running, Hobby also faced the task of rapid expansion. By December 1942, the WAAC had met the initial strength requirement envisioned by the War Department of 12,000 WACs.<sup>123</sup> There was talk, however, within the War Department as early as August 1942, of the need for 1,500,000 WACs.<sup>124</sup> As Hobby and her staff tried to plan for this envisioned expansion, they received no definitive guidance from the War Department about recruiting goals, additional possible training posts, and future use of WACs.<sup>125</sup> Until the WAAC became a part of the Army in the spring of 1943, the Corps functioned in limbo. Additional training centers were acquired and staffed, but most were never used to their full capacity because of recruiting difficulties and the lack of a clear mandate for the WAAC.<sup>126</sup>

There was also the issue of training. During the WAAC years, Hobby controlled the training curriculum of the Corps. She and her staff initially adopted a training plan that paralleled their male counterparts. The first WAACs received four to six weeks of training, with the focus on "transforming a civilian woman into a 'physically fit, psychologically well-adjusted, well-disciplined soldier who was informed of the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of women in the Army'."<sup>127</sup> Women were instructed in

military courtesy, the Articles of War, Army organization, and drill and ceremony, map reading, current events, and property accountability.<sup>128</sup> Hobby stressed the need for emphasize “those subjects which make a definite contribution to the production of women soldiers [and] make all courses deal with practical problems to the greatest extent possible.”<sup>129</sup> Additional courses, such as Army reports and correspondence, mess operations and supply, and the Allied campaign, were included in the curriculum.<sup>130</sup> This emphasis of the practical continued until the WAAC integration in 1943.

When the WAAC was integrated into the Army in 1943, the training function fell under the Military Training Division.<sup>131</sup> Hobby provided them with a summary of the four-week training program and indicated that the four-week program could continue if the emphasis remained on basic soldier skills.<sup>132</sup> Six months later, the Military Training Division increased the WAC basic training course to six weeks, the same length as the male basic course.<sup>133</sup> Since the men’s course contained over 150 hours of combat training, the WAC increased the length of most of the noncombat courses to fill the allotted time.<sup>134</sup>

The WAAC did not have field reception centers to conduct the basic soldier inprocessing because of their small size. Consequently, the training centers provided shots, uniforms, and classification officers to determine soldier qualifications.<sup>135</sup> Initially, all this was done during the basic training, but the WAAC quickly discovered this detracted from the instruction, so established a reception center to perform the necessary administrative processing prior to the start of the basic training.<sup>136</sup> Women received one-third more drill and ceremony and physical training, four times more military courtesy training, and three times more safety training.<sup>137</sup> Hobby tried in vain to get the course

adjusted to meet the particular needs of the WAC, but she was unsuccessful. She sought more training in officer-enlisted relations, a point of contention in the field where officers often dated enlisted women, but the Military Training Division felt additional instruction unnecessary.<sup>138</sup> She also wanted greater emphasis placed on how military women were to conduct themselves in places, such as trains, clubs and public dining establishments.<sup>139</sup> The chivalrous conduct of male soldiers often presented difficulties that female soldiers needed instruction in handling, such as, Who exits or enters a building first, the senior person present or the female?<sup>140</sup> The curriculum would not change despite Hobby's requests. However, the cadre at the training centers tried to incorporate some of the requested changes into the training to meet the needs of the WAACs in the field.

It was from this very cadre that two of Hobby's lieutenants emerged. Anna Wilson, a battalion commander at Fort Des Moines, would be the WAAC Director for the European Theater, and Charity Adams would command an all-female postal battalion in England and then on the European continent. Each contributed to the legacy of leadership in her own way.

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<sup>1</sup>William P. Hobby Jr., *Oveta Culp Hobby Biography*, Handbook of Texas; available from [www.rice.edu/fondren/woodson/exhibits/wac/hobby.html](http://www.rice.edu/fondren/woodson/exhibits/wac/hobby.html); Internet.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. Senator Conally was a sergeant major during the Spanish American War, spent six terms in Congress before running for the Senate in 1928; was appointed as part of a bi-partisan committee to serve as delegates in San Francisco to establish the United Nations. Additional information available from <http://www.rootsweb.com/~txfalls/bioCONNALLYthomasterrysenator.htm>; Internet.

<sup>9</sup>Hobby, *Oveta Culp Hobby Biography*.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Treadwell, 21. The precise name was the Women's Interest Section of the War Department Bureau of Public Relations.

<sup>14</sup>Hobby, *Oveta Culp Hobby Biography*.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Treadwell, 21.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>22</sup>Hobby, *Oveta Culp Hobby Biography*.

<sup>23</sup>Treadwell, 13. The initial WAAC plans were developed without the benefit of having Major Hughes plan as a guide.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 30.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>*Public Law 554*, 14 May 1942.

<sup>31</sup>Treadwell, 31.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 32-34.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid. The WAAC and later the WAC maintained command and control of all WACs even though they worked in various offices outside the WAAC/WAC companies.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 35-36.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 59-61.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>58</sup>Bland, 135-136.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 136.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 137, footnote. The WAAC legislation was not passed until May 1942.

<sup>61</sup>Treadwell, 47.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 47-49.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 58. The WAAC legislation placed a 10 percent cap on the number of black women in the Corps. This was the same percentage applied to the black males in the Army.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 58-59.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Brenda L. Moore, *To Serve My Country, to Serve My Race, The Story of the Only African American WACs Stationed Overseas During World War II* (New York: University Press, 1996), 51-55

<sup>71</sup>Leslie D. Meyer, *Creating GI Jane* (city, state: Columbia University Press, 1996), 51.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 59.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>76</sup>Major General Jeanne Holm, U.S. Air Force (retired), *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution*, rev. ed. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1992), 29.

<sup>77</sup>Treadwell, 56.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid. The primary reasons for initial disqualification were age and citizenship.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>86</sup>Holm, 49.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>88</sup>Treadwell, 173-174.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 182-183.

<sup>90</sup>Meyer, 81.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., chapter 5, 100-121 passim.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 105.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 105.

<sup>95</sup>Treadwell, 617.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Meyer, 107. The basis for discharge was generally conduct unbecoming an officer or reflecting discredit on the Corps.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>101</sup>Treadwell, 501.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Meyer, 110.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 110.

<sup>105</sup>Treadwell, 507.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 508.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 509.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 50-51.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 259.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 482.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 482.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 486.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 484.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 110.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 111-112.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 632. The WAC operated five training centers at Fort Des Moines, Iowa; Daytona Beach, Florida; Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia; Fort Devens, Massachusetts; and Camp Polk, Louisiana. Treadwell, Chapter VII, "Spring Expansion," 122-126. The Camp Polk facility closed first. It has served as a prisoner of war (POW) camp and by June 1943 the facilities were again needed for POWs. Fort Devens opened in March 1943 and closed in August 1943. Daytona Beach closed next. By March 1944, only Fort Des Moines and Fort Oglethorpe remained.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 634.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 635.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 636.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 634.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., 634.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 638.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> C. Kay Larson, *'Til I Come Marching Home': A Brief History of American Women in World War II* (Pasadena, MD: The Minerva Center, 1995), vii. In the forward, John Eisenhower notes that Hobby, while visiting the European Theater of Operations, paid a visit to the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower. Riding in an elevator with General Eisenhower, Hobby refused to exit the elevator ahead of him, telling him nicely to go ahead. General Eisenhower gestured for her to proceed, saying, "ladies first." Hobby refused, citing military rank over gender. Eisenhower, seeing he had lost, proceeded from the elevator ahead of Hobby.

## CHAPTER 4

### HOBBY'S "LIEUTENANTS"

#### Anna Wilson, WAC Director, European Theater of Operations

Anna W. Wilson was one of the first WAAC Officers selected in 1942.<sup>1</sup> Living in California and working as the Head of the Department of Health and Physical Education at the Beverly Hills Unified School District, she received her notification of acceptance into the WAAC on 4 July 1942.<sup>2</sup> Wilson was 32 years old, had a master's degree in physical education and a good job.<sup>3</sup> She reported to Fort Des Moines on 20 July to begin a new adventure in the WAAC. After completing her basic training, Wilson remained at Fort Des Moines and served as a member of the training cadre, as a company commander, as a battalion commander, and as a member of the board of officers who considered officer candidate applications.<sup>4</sup> In mid-April 1943, she was named WAAC Director for the European Theater (ETO) and traveled to London, England. There she was part of the G-1 charged with studying how WAACs could replace the English Women's Army Air Force (WAAF) and enlisted men in the European Theater.<sup>5</sup> Preparing a report in less than 30 days, it was Captain (CPT) Wilson's opinion that women could replace all British WAAF personnel and fill not less than seventeen other jobs currently performed by enlisted men.<sup>6</sup> Wilson was also responsible for insuring proper housing, supplies, clothing and equipment for the women, suitable medical and physical examinations, laundry, dry cleaning and shoe repair facilities, and recreation facilities were available for the women entering the theater.<sup>7</sup> She worked closely with the Red Cross to insure the enlisted women entering the theater would have access to the same sorts of recreational facilities that were available to male soldiers. Her jurisdiction

included England and eventually France and 7,000 WACs. She was the first staff director appointed to an overseas theater. Wilson served as the Staff Director from the date of her arrival in the ETO, but did not receive formal recognition for her positions until 31 December 1943 when her position was officially recognized and her duties enumerated.<sup>8</sup>

Wilson encountered some difficulties in establishing her office in Europe. There was confusion about her title as director. U.S. Army officers assumed there was a special definition or that she carried special command authority as the director.<sup>9</sup> She was forbidden from conducting inspections of WAC soldiers.<sup>10</sup> The War Department had specifically designated this as one of the responsibilities of the staff director; however, officials in Europe feared this function would usurp the duties of the Inspector General's Office.<sup>11</sup> The WAAC inspections were intended to provide information on how best to use women and for making recommendations regarding the planning and policies that governed their deployment.<sup>12</sup> Commanders were also reluctant to provide statistical reports on WAC strength, losses, disciplinary actions, and any other problems.<sup>13</sup>

Wilson overcame this by meeting and interacting with the command staff. Staff sections that were aware of the existence of the WAC staff director were more likely to bring WAC business to her. When Eisenhower returned from North Africa in late 1943, a formal announcement regarding the WAC was distributed. It directed that, "all matters pertaining exclusively to the Women's Army Corps and necessitating the formulation or interpretation of policy will be referred directly to the WAC section."<sup>14</sup> Additionally, WAC officers were assigned to the quartermaster, provost marshal, adjutant general, and inspector general's offices giving these staff sections greater visibility of the WAC functions.<sup>15</sup>

Wilson laid the groundwork for the reception and utilization of all WAC personnel in the European Theater. She was personally responsible for the reception, processing, classification, necessary training, and administration of WACs in Europe.<sup>16</sup> She is credited with frequent personal visits to the various WAC units and in establishing high standards of personal and professional conduct.<sup>17</sup> She is remembered for demanding personal fitness of her soldiers, reminding them that each had a contract with the U.S. Army to safeguard her individual "health to insure maximum efficiency on the job."<sup>18</sup>

In order to insure that WAC soldiers were properly assigned and taken care of, Wilson maintained control over many more administrative actions involving the WACs in Europe than was required for those stateside.<sup>19</sup> Her office approved all promotions, requested and allotted all quotas, requested personnel and acted on requests for discharge or returns to the United States.<sup>20</sup> These functions normally were the responsibility of the G-1 Section, but Wilson saw that without someone in the section to oversee how WACs were administered, it was best to keep those functions with the WAC staff director's office.

Wilson also insured the WACs assigned to the ETO were properly cared for to include insuring they had proper clothing. Many women in England worked the night shift in unheated buildings or bunkers.<sup>21</sup> Their clothing was ill suited for these conditions. The situation was declared an emergency, and men's long-sleeved undershirts and long drawers were authorized for wear.<sup>22</sup> However, due to the ill-fitting nature of these garments, many women refused to wear them.<sup>23</sup> Wilson requested that the War Department provide a three-piece wool uniform, including a skirt, slacks, and a jacket.<sup>24</sup> The War Department denied the request because of the perceived more pressing need to

supply the new battle uniform for men in the theater.<sup>25</sup> Wilson, however, managed to find a way to procure the winter clothing items in the ETO and to provide each WAC with at least one set, which included the new battle jacket.<sup>26</sup>

In June 1945, in the *Overseas Woman*, a monthly publication for servicewomen overseas, Wilson published a short article encouraging the women still in Europe to remain focused on the mission at hand, to remember their responsibilities as service members, to put aside their personal desires to return home, and to rededicate themselves to the mission at hand. She encouraged her soldiers to take the opportunity to see the country and to meet the people around them.<sup>27</sup> Wilson certainly knew many were anxious to return home, but she continued to remind them of their mission and the importance of that mission even as the war drew to a close.

During her tenure, Wilson received the Legion of Merit on 20 October 1944. The citation read, for “exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services as Director of Women’s U.S. Army Corps, Personnel, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations from 14 April 1943 to 4 October 1944. She has been directly responsible for the success of the WAC in the European Theater of Operations.”<sup>28</sup> She left the WAC in 1946, but continued to be an active advocate for the inclusion of women in the Army.<sup>29</sup>

#### Charity Adams, Commander, 6888th Postal Battalion

Charity Adams was the first black woman commissioned in the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps. Born in 1918 to a black minister, she was the first of four children.<sup>30</sup> Raised in a very strict home, where reading and discipline were the norm, Adams graduated valedictorian in her class at Booker T. Washington High School in Columbia,

South Carolina.<sup>31</sup> She attended Wilberforce College in Ohio where she studied math and physics.<sup>32</sup> Like her father, she worked her way through college.<sup>33</sup> After college, she returned to Columbia where she taught high school math and general science for four years.<sup>34</sup> She spent her summers working on her master's degree in vocational psychology at Ohio State University.<sup>35</sup> In 1942, she received a letter inviting her to apply for a commission in the newly formed Women's Army Auxiliary Corps.<sup>36</sup> Despite being discouraged by her friends, Adams applied and then quickly forgot about her application.<sup>37</sup> In route to graduate school in the summer of 1942, Adams received word that she had been accepted in the WAAC. On 19 July she arrived at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, to begin her training with the first class of WAAC officers.<sup>38</sup> The U.S. Army was segregated in 1942, and Adams and her thirty-nine black classmates were billeted in separate housing, although all their training was integrated and living conditions were identical.<sup>39</sup> Adams graduated on 29 August 1942 and remained at Fort Des Moines as a member of the cadre.<sup>40</sup> She and the other officers received additional training and were assigned as company commanders.<sup>41</sup> Each of the company commanders had a company advisor to oversee the workings of the company and train the commander.<sup>42</sup> During Adams' tenure she had four different advisers, all-white males, though she commanded an all-black company.<sup>43</sup> One was a cavalry officer intent on drill and ceremony, one was a young, motorcycle riding lieutenant, one a shy southerner, and the last, a tactical officer who seemed to keep everything in the proper proportions, speaking only when there was a point to be made, spending time in the company, but not too much time.<sup>44</sup> Adams tried to learn something from each of her advisers.<sup>45</sup>

As a company commander, Adams faced many of the same challenges Hobby faced, only on a different scale. The first female officers in the WAAC did not have any noncommissioned officers in their units. Officers performed all leadership tasks within the company.<sup>46</sup> This included shepherding soldiers through uniform issue, medical processing, and testing to determine their future classification in the WAAC.<sup>47</sup> There were no reception centers for women, like the men had, to insure all these tasks were completed prior to the start of basic training. These responsibilities fell to the nascent company. Because there was no core of trained officers to lead the newly formed companies, much of Adams' leadership training came on the job in her daily functioning as the commander and from her company advisers.

Adams moved up the ranks quickly. The WAAC Commandant Colonel Frank McCloskie recognized her organizational skills and leadership abilities and moved her from company command to the Plans and Training Section.<sup>48</sup> While in the Plans and Training Section, Adams assisted writing an overseas theater of operations lesson for new WAC officers.<sup>49</sup> Just as the project was completed, the Training Section was informed there would be no such training for WAC officers.<sup>50</sup> Adams and her fellow officers quickly learned, however, that such projects need not be destroyed, just put aside for another day. Adams was also assigned the task of supervising the training of new recruits and inspecting training facilities. She traveled extensively to bases in Massachusetts; Washington, D.C.; New Jersey; and North Carolina.<sup>51</sup>

In 1943, the WAC tried to attract more black women by providing greater promotion opportunities. To accomplish this, the WAC proposed a separate Negro Training Regiment to be headed by the newly promoted Major Adams. Adams wanted

nothing to do with a separate but equal training regiment.<sup>52</sup> She did not believe that a separate regiment could be equal and knew that white officers would be in charge in some form. She was greatly relieved when the idea quietly was forgotten.

However, black women were still not being sent overseas. Colonel Hobby refused to allow small groups of black WACs to be assigned to black, male companies for fear of them being viewed as “companions” for the male soldiers.<sup>53</sup> Hobby closely monitored the role of black WACs in the Corps, as did many influential leaders, like Dr. Bethune. All strove to insure that the reputation of the Corps was singularly positive and not based on race.

In the winter of 1944 a request from the ETO came in for 800 black WACs to establish a central postal directory.<sup>54</sup> Adams was selected to command this unit. In December 1944, Adams went to Birmingham, England, to make arrangement for the arrival of the 6888th Postal Battalion. The 6888th was an all-female, all-black battalion, responsible for processing mail for over seven million soldiers, sailor, airmen, marines, USO employees and Red Cross workers in the ETO.<sup>55</sup> Adams divided the 800 women of her battalion into five companies that worked three shifts round the clock to process the backlog of mail.<sup>56</sup>

In preparation for overseas movement, the women of the 6888th received overseas training at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. They learned to put on a gas mask, negotiate an obstacle course, received additional equipment to include winter clothing, and continued to master close order drill and map reading.<sup>57</sup> Major Adams also took the opportunity to remind the women of the importance of their mission. She spoke about the “necessity for cooperation and goodwill and above all, the elimination of prejudice and

pettiness toward each other.<sup>58</sup> Adams was keenly aware that many were watching this new group of WACs, and she reminded the women to conduct themselves accordingly.<sup>59</sup>

As the commander Adams worked hard to take care of her soldiers. For example, once Adams received a complaint regarding the processing of a letter to a senior officer. The letter had been returned to the sender. Adams promptly investigated the allegation and determined who within the battalion had directed that the letter be returned to the sender. The unnamed senior officer demanded that Adams provide him with the name of the soldier responsible for the incident.<sup>60</sup> Adams refused, insisting that all that happened within the battalion was ultimately her responsibility. The senior officer pressed Adams for a name, and she continued to refuse to name the soldier. In the end, Adams received a letter of reprimand for her conduct.<sup>61</sup>

Adams constantly sought ways to improve the living conditions for her soldiers. She established a noncommissioned officer's club, an officer's lounge, and a beauty parlor within the battalion area.<sup>62</sup> The beauty parlor was so popular that nurses and Red Cross workers from outside the unit traveled to Birmingham to use the facility.<sup>63</sup> In order to better understand her soldiers' jobs, Adams worked the midnight shift at telephone switchboard. She had received complaints that the telephone operators were listening in on phone calls.<sup>64</sup> She found this to be the most boring job in the battalion, but she understood what her soldiers were doing and was better able to address concerns about how the operators did their jobs. As the war drew to a close, men rotating back to the United States often stopped by the battalion to visit friends. This became a problem and Adams divined a solution: she assigned gate guards to screen all personnel entering the compound. However, she could not arm these women.<sup>65</sup> Adams managed to find a young

British paratrooper to train the gate guards in jujitsu.<sup>66</sup> A class schedule was developed and women were trained in self-defense and techniques for subduing uncooperative soldiers. Adams found this to be the best solution for the prohibition forbidding the carrying of firearms.

On the early morning hours of 12 April 1945, Adams received word that the President Roosevelt had died.<sup>67</sup> As the ranking officer in Birmingham, Adams represented the United States at the various memorial services held in her area for the President.<sup>68</sup> The 6888th received invitations to thirty memorial services in the Birmingham area and insured representatives from the unit were present at most of the memorials.<sup>69</sup>

Adams led her battalion through a period of tremendous change. The unit received its orders late in the war; traveled to Birmingham, England; and established operations there only to be moved to the continent of Europe as the war drew to a close. Adams cared about her soldiers, about their performance, and about their futures. She sought practical solutions to problems in her battalion and always kept the welfare of her soldiers foremost in her mind.

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<sup>1</sup>Anna W. Wilson, Personal Papers, [date?](#), Women in Military Service Foundation, [location of papers](#).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.; and Assistant Commandant, First WAAC Training Center, Des Moines, IA, memorandum from Anna W. Wilson, 3rd Officer, WAAC, 12 November 1942. Wilson was designated commander for 1st Company, 2nd Regiment on 20 September 1942 and Battalion Commander of 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment on 27 October 1942. She was also appointed as a board member that same day for the Officer Candidate applicant review.

<sup>5</sup>WAAC-WAC, 1942-1945, Historical Section, Headquarters, ETO, Review Branch, War Department Office of the Public Relations, 15 January 1945, 5.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. The jobs Wilson listed included, drivers, radio operators, draftsmen, translators, camera technicians, aircraft warning plotters, aircraft warning turret supervisors, weather observers, radio mechanics, mimeograph operators, photo technicians, aircraft warning filtereres, aircraft warning tellers, telephonist, teletypists, stenographers, and clerks.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 14.

<sup>9</sup>Treadwell, 394.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 380-381. The WAAC became the WAC in May 1943, with complete conversion to WAC status completed by 30 September 1943.

<sup>17</sup>Wilson Papers, Public Relations Section, 3 October 1944, Courtesy of Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation, Inc., [city, state](#)

<sup>18</sup>Wilson Papers, Public Relations Section, 6 February 1945, Courtesy of Women in Military Service for American Memorial Foundation, Inc. [city, state](#)

<sup>19</sup>Treadwell, 395.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 396.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 396-397.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>*Overseas Woman*, June 1945, 12-13, from the Collection of Thema Edwards, Collection #548, Women in Military Service Foundation, Washington, D.C.

<sup>28</sup>WAAC – WAC 1942-1945.

<sup>29</sup>Treadwell, 742.

<sup>30</sup>Carol Sears Botsch, *Charity Adams Early* (Aiken: University of South Carolina, Political Science, 10 June 2002); available from [www.usca.edu/aasc/earley.htm](http://www.usca.edu/aasc/earley.htm); Internet.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Charity Adams Early, *One Woman's Army, A Black Officer Remembers the WAC* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1989), **reprinted 1996**, 9.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 50-53.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 42-88 passim.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 91-92.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>52</sup>Biographical Resource Center, available from <http://www.africanpubs.com/Apps/bios/0005EarleyCharity.asp?pic=none>; Internet.

<sup>53</sup>Treadwell, 599.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Early, 148. Treadwell estimates the 6888th processed over three million pieces of mail. Treadwell, 600.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 147-148.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 125.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 151-152.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 146-147, 167.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 146-147.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>65</sup>Treadwell, 552. Women were not allowed to carry or fire weapons during the war.

<sup>66</sup>Early, 184.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER 5

### TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all those who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order.<sup>1</sup>

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Leadership is influencing people--by providing purpose, direction and motivation--while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization.

Army Field Manual 22-100, *Army Leadership*

The Army defines Transformational Leadership as a style that “focuses on inspiration and change.”<sup>2</sup> It emphasizes individual growth on both a professional and personal level.<sup>3</sup> It requires leaders to motivate individuals first, and then the group and to have the courage to communicate their intent and then let soldiers act.<sup>4</sup> Transformational leadership is leadership with an emphasis on vision, development of the individual, and empowerment.<sup>5</sup> The characteristics of a transformational leader include strong communication skills, accessibility, and concern for others. It is the ability to lead independent people and create interdependency within an organization.

While transformational leadership may be discounted as “too touchy-feely,” it is applicable to rapidly changing organizations. The demands of operating in the information age bombard organizations and individuals on many levels, leaving participants running to keep up. Today, the U.S. Army is facing changes resulting from the deliberate decision to transform the Army into an organization even more “strategically responsive, full spectrum capable, modular and scalable.”<sup>6</sup> No doubt this

process will result in changes to the Army, many of which the organization is still exploring. The question is, How can the Army keep soldiers motivated, interested, and engaged during such a tumultuous time? The example of the World War II WAAC/WAC stands as particularly instructive because those women possessed a unique leadership perspective that was in its application, transforming.

Dr. Barbara Gilliss in her article The Unique Qualities of Female Leadership posits that, “Transforming leadership requires intuition and creativity.”<sup>7</sup> She points out that transformational leaders are those who can passionately embrace and convey their vision with clarity while inspiring others to join in the pursuit of that vision.<sup>8</sup> This requires empowering the led by clearly communicating the vision for the organization and for each task. This is interactive leadership. It energizes followers by making them feel valuable and engaged in the process, while promoting positive attitudes about the work they are doing and about the organization they are doing it for.<sup>9</sup> Interactive leadership encourages participation by all while requiring the leader to let subordinates work without constant intervention and additional instructions, promoting responsibility and autonomy.

This background is consistent with Sally Helgesen, one of the premier thinkers about the role of work and leadership in the “knowledge economy,” characterization of women’s leadership as “encompass[ing] a vision of society.”<sup>10</sup> According to Helgesen, this “broad focus derives from their consciousness of themselves as participants in a revolution in expectations of and opportunities for women . . . they feel they must make a difference.”<sup>11</sup> This notion sums up the view most all of the WAAC/WAC leaders during World War II.<sup>12</sup>

Other social scientists have characterized female leadership as transformational, but from a different perspective.<sup>13</sup> According to Judy Rosener, a growing number of scholars and experts insist that the new style of interactive, collaborative leadership being promoted today is not a relatively new World War II creation, but a style historically practiced by women.<sup>14</sup> This leadership style is not new to today's generation or to women in particular. As Oveta Culp Hobby took the reins of the newly formed WAAC, she had no choice but to adopt an interactive, collaborative leadership style. The WAAC grew out of multiple departments within the War Department. There was little to no communication between the various departments and no one to coordinate the actions of the various departments. Further, there was no single, clear vision within the various branches of the War Department as to what the WAAC would be like. It was a completely new type of U.S. Army unit. The only other female precedent in uniform was the U.S. Army Nurses. They worked in a highly defined organization with exacting protocols that closely mirrored civilian health care practices more than military organizations. This new organization, as envisioned by General Marshall and others, would be something quite different. Women would fill clerical and other selected technical jobs to free men to fight.<sup>15</sup>

Army Transformation also requires the clear communication of a vision for the transformed Army. Army Transformation is an effort to "create a culture of innovation that seeks to exploit and shape the changing conduct of military competition."<sup>16</sup> This includes exploring new combinations of technology, people and equipment while maintaining readiness.<sup>17</sup> It means challenging assumptions about how the Army operates

across the full spectrum of conflict and seeking the ideas from all involved in the change to insure the best ideas are considered during the process.

The leadership philosophy of Oveta Culp Hobby, Anna Wilson, and Charity Adams reflects many of these transformational ideals. It is distinctly reflected throughout the first WAC leadership manual published in 1945. This document, *The WAC Officer: A Guide to Successful Leadership*, embodies the philosophies of the early leaders and was the leadership doctrine for the Women's Army Corps.<sup>18</sup> The *WAC Officer Guide* includes many of the same leadership principles found in Army Field Manual 22-100, such as setting the example in all things, dedication to duty and integrity.<sup>19</sup> However, it addresses more and goes on to place great emphasis on an officer's responsibility for knowing her subordinates, communicating with them, encouraging them and empowering them.<sup>20</sup>

The *WAC Officer Guide* provided a ground-up view with comments from enlisted women about positive and negative leadership traits, putting these in common, no nonsense language. It provided officers with guidance on how to conduct an initial interview with the soldiers of the command, how to conduct a disciplinary interview, and how to evaluate personal leadership traits.<sup>21</sup> Like Hobby, Wilson, and Adams, it focused on developing loyalty to the organization and not to a particular leader or leadership style. These women believed that a straightforward approach to leading soldiers was the best way. The WAC leadership mantras were: "We are WACs: if there is a problem, ask questions, investigate, and make a decision; be consistent and fair; always look out for the well being of your soldiers; encourage soldiers to be part of the team by developing their individual strengths; as you strengthen the individual you will also strengthen the team; look for signs of immaturity in your problem soldiers and help them to grow past

them; not all problem soldiers need to be discharged; what is the source of the problem? Do you as the leader know?"<sup>22</sup> This leadership style is time intensive, but WAC leaders were constantly reminded that caring for subordinates was not just a full-time job, it was an overtime job.<sup>23</sup>

### Leadership and Morale

The *WAC Officer Guide* reminded all officers that: "Rank has its responsibilities as well as its privileges."<sup>24</sup> The *WAC Officer Guide* viewed leadership as a privilege of the fortunate, not necessarily of only the worthy.<sup>25</sup> The focus was not on officership as an elitist position, but as a "position of stewardship" to both the Army and to all who serve.<sup>26</sup> The leader must be concerned for the welfare of those led, must understand their needs and problems and respect their individuality. This focus on stewardship advises officers of their responsibility to their subordinates to see that they are well cared for, that they are given the opportunity to grow and mature while in the Army and to help soldiers to that. It reminds leaders their "only reason for being . . . is the enlisted women of the corps."<sup>27</sup> This emphasis on stewardship stemmed from another unique aspect of the WAAC/WAC, the purely voluntary and highly selective nature of the organization, something not found in the World War II conscript Army.

The transition from civilian life to military life has always been a difficult one. The same was true for the women of the WAC. Unlike their wartime male peers, they volunteered to serve at a time when there was no social expectation that they would do so in military uniform. The transforming Army is no different. This parallel of volunteer service is most resonant to today, when there is no draft and there is no expectation that citizens should serve in the military. Under these circumstances, the transformation from

citizen to soldier is even more stunning when it means voluntarily adopting a very structured day, conformity in appearance, and adapting to an inflexible schedule, all the while trying to learn the regime of a new job complete with unfamiliar customs and traditions.<sup>28</sup>

The *WAC Officer Guide* is particularly sensitive to the magnitude of this voluntarily life change and points out that certain basic needs must be met to help ease this transition. Those needs include: the need for belonging, social recognition, leaders who demonstrate an interest in the individual's welfare, opportunities for self-expression and personal achievement.<sup>29</sup> Those needs remain today. They represent personal needs of soldiers, not unique to any particular era or gender. They represent human needs common to all and often overlooked. The *WAC Officer Guide* reminded leaders that: "We work and fight hardest for that in which we have a personal stake or which touches us most closely."<sup>30</sup> The WAC found it important to meet these basic soldier needs to speed the transition to the military lifestyle.

#### Formula for Leadership

The *WAC Officer Guide* made it clear that leaders were expected to know their soldiers individually.<sup>31</sup> WAC leaders emphasized the importance of knowing each soldier in their unit by name and conducting an individual interview to learn more about them personally.<sup>32</sup> The interview was not intended to be pro forma, but rather was an opportunity for the commander to learn a little about the soldier as an individual. The *WAC Officer Guide* emphasized putting the soldier at ease, talking with her about her hometown, family, and reasons for joining the Corps, what she hoped to accomplish and what special skills she brought to the Corps.<sup>33</sup> This interview also gave the commander

an opportunity to discuss the mission of the Corps and the needs of the Army. More importantly, it helped to assure the soldier that her commander cared about her individually.

Concern for the welfare of the individual soldier and showing appreciation to soldiers for their efforts also helped to build pride in the unit, the Corps and the Army. This concern could be expressed in simple gestures such as saying thank-you for a job well done, noticing extra effort or acknowledging some other achievement. Rapid changes in doctrine, equipment or even unit organization often make it difficult for leaders to know their soldiers individually. However, the simple gesture of acknowledging a job well done provides a forum for getting to know a soldier. It also helps to build unit pride. Unit pride often results when soldiers see that their efforts make a difference, when they realize the ultimate success and reputation of the unit depends on the collective efforts of the individual soldiers. The women of the WAC tried to make sure the women the lead understood this.

The WAC insisted that leaders be approachable. Leaders were encouraged to attend social events where their subordinates were present, and to ask about their families and changes in a soldier's life.<sup>34</sup> The WAC leadership believed that soldiers who knew that their leaders cared about them as individuals and about their unit had greater pride in the unit and showed greater loyalty to their leaders. While fraternization was not authorized, the leadership philosophy of the WAC was that attending a social event would not compromise a leader's standing within the unit.<sup>35</sup> The leaders of the all-volunteer WAAC emphasized appropriate communications and interactions with subordinates, which led to a greater understanding of the individuals being led.

This leadership style contrast dramatically with the leadership practices in the World War II male, conscript Army. During the war, the Selective Service Act of 1940 made all males between 18 and 45 eligible for military service.<sup>36</sup> It called for not more than 900,000 draftees in training at any given time.<sup>37</sup> The leaders of these men used a directive style of leadership. They were preparing to lead men into war. Because these units were not all-volunteer organizations they required a more rigid and authoritarian leadership style.

Men in the Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia during World War II were evaluated on their physical fitness, appearance and bearing, voice, control of men, resourcefulness, and ability to get along with their peers.<sup>38</sup> The emphasis was on leading by physical example. Unit leaders needed to be the most technically competent men in the unit, able to instruct those around him on how best to accomplish the mission. Male officer candidates were expected to be level headed and able to be resourceful in difficult situations.<sup>39</sup> There was no evaluation of the candidate's ability to build a team, form consensus, or get to know individuals. If an officer candidate was technically and tactically competent, it was presumed that he could direct his subordinates to act in order to accomplish an assigned mission. The leadership style of the conscripted force was not well suited to the WAAC. The WAAC was a volunteer force. Women joined not because they had to, but because they wanted to.

The leadership style outlined in the *WAC Officer Guide* strives to take advantage of the extremely positive motivation of the volunteer soldier and to set a command climate that allowed for the free flow of ideas within the organization. In a transforming Army, where the technologies are not yet perfected and changes are often experimental,

the input of all involved is critical to the success of the transformation. The led must be able to provide input on how best to utilize new technologies. This interaction between the leader and led helps create loyalty. Soldiers who know their input is valued will take ownership in the organization. If the led know the leaders consider their needs and have their best interests at heart, they will be more likely to accept less favorable decisions. The *WAC Officer Guide* points out that there are times when the leader must make a decision without the input of the led and without any discussion about the decision.<sup>40</sup>

In the Transforming Army, where technologies are not yet perfected and changes are often experimental, the input of all involved is critical to the success of the transformation. The led must be able to provide input on how best to utilize the new technologies and to identify any shortcomings. Soldiers who know their input is valued and considered are more likely to think about solutions rather than waiting for directions. If the led know the leaders consider their ideas, they are more likely to share them. This interaction will strengthen the organization and develop the led to assume positions of greater responsibility in the future. The experience of the World War II WAAC/WAC validates this principle.

The *Army Transformation Roadmap* discusses the need to foster innovation.<sup>41</sup> The key to successfully accomplishing that mission is to encourage the participation of all members of the organization. That requires leaders to know their subordinates, to communicate with them to learn their strengths and weaknesses and to seek their ideas. Innovation must be both from the top down and the bottom up.<sup>42</sup> The *Transformational Roadmap* discusses the adoption of a “constructivist” teaching method that provides a problem and tools to solve it, but does not require a specific methodology to be used to

solve the problem.<sup>43</sup> By this definition, a “constructivist” model was successfully used by the WAAC/WAC during World War II. Hobby and her lieutenants were given the tools to form the WAAC, in the form of support from the War Department, but there was no specific methodology dictated for the successful implementation of an all female Army organization. With these tools, open communications, innovation and vision, the WAAC was formed, improved and grew to become a permanent of the U.S. Army.

The *Army Transformation Roadmap* also discusses creation of “a common Warrior Culture.”<sup>44</sup> A precedent for this type of dominant organizational culture is found in the WAC. The women who served were “WACs,” not telephone operators, mechanics or secretaries, but “WACs.”<sup>45</sup> The women were inculcated with this strong and primary sense of military identity from the start of basic training. The focus was on being a WAC in every endeavor; including appearance and conduct on and off duty.<sup>46</sup> This created a common culture within the WAC. The transforming Army seeks to do the same. As the *Roadmap* points out, “a common Warrior Culture” will demand a holistic approach that includes emphasis on interpersonal skills.<sup>47</sup> The leaders of the WAAC/WAC used just such an approach, setting and maintaining high standards while emphasizing a common WAC culture.

The leadership of the WAC also emphasized the importance of being loyal to oneself, superiors, peers, subordinates and the Army.<sup>48</sup> The *WAC Officer Guide* points out the importance of placing loyalty to the Army ahead of loyalty to oneself while at the same time maintaining individuality within the framework of the Army.<sup>49</sup> It emphasizes being decisive and consistent, explaining decisions where possible, but setting a command climate of trust that does not require explanation.<sup>50</sup> The *WAC Officer Guide*

stresses the importance of taking responsibility for the unit and delegating authority to subordinates as often as possible to insure their development.<sup>51</sup> Adams certainly believed in and exemplified this attribute when she accepted a letter of reprimand for refusing to disclose the name of a subordinate during an investigation of the routing of a piece of mail to a senior officer. It also discusses the need for fairness within the unit, not just in deeds, but in appearance as well.<sup>52</sup> This, coupled with consistency provides the basis for discipline with a unit. However, fairness and consistency do not alleviate the need to be firm in dealing with subordinates.<sup>53</sup>

The women of the WAC were anxious to know everything about the Army. They wanted to look sharp in their uniforms and were anxious to demonstrate their knowledge of drill and ceremony and proper military courtesies.<sup>54</sup> They were tolerant of instructors at the training center and noted shortcomings in the instruction when appropriate.<sup>55</sup>

Ninety percent of the first class of women was college educated and had high expectations for the training they were to receive.<sup>56</sup> This collective desire combined with the novelty of this new opportunity for women translated into a unique form of motivation, which the WAAC/WAC leadership sought to take advantage of, as did their leadership style. The leaders of the WAAC knew that in order to be valued and successful within the larger organization, they also had to embrace many of the same leader attributes of the combat leaders. As Colonel Don C. Faith, the first commandant of the WAAC Training Center in Fort Des Moines, pointed out, “The best way to combat this attitude [that the WAAC would not be successful or was unneeded] was to train the new soldiers in those qualities the Army values most highly: neatness in dress, punctiliousness

in military courtesy, smartness and precision in drill and ceremonies and willingness and ability to do the job.”<sup>57</sup>

Interestingly, the *WAC Officer Guide* places less emphasis on technical job competency and more on communication and interpersonal skills.<sup>58</sup> WAC leaders did not need to lead their soldier in an assault up a hill or in seizing an objective. Often they only had all their soldiers together for the morning and evening formations. Most worked in a headquarters, many in clerical positions subordinate to male officers. Hence the WAC leaders often had little duty day contact time with their subordinates. The transformational Army is similar in this regard. As the U.S. Army works to reshape its force structure, the idea of a “units of action” that are assembled for a particular mission means leaders will have less direct control over their subordinates duty day activities. Soldiers will be assembled to go and perform a particular mission, potentially with individuals they have never served with before. Leaders who understand the individual soldier in this context and can develop in him/her a sense of pride and belonging to the unit will strengthen their units.

The traits that made the leaders of the WAC successful were personal traits such as sincerity; courage and a genuine care for those they led.<sup>59</sup> Technical knowledge and efficiency did not impact the soldiers of the WAC like fairness and unselfishness.<sup>60</sup> Those lacking a personal leadership style were unable to overcome this with strengths in efficiency.<sup>61</sup> All knew how to give and take orders, but the women who were concerned with insuring that the Corps was the best that it could be and that the women who made up the Corps were the best they could be were the most effective leaders. They set and maintained high standards for themselves and their organization; their first thoughts were

for the good of the Army, the good of the Corps, and the good of their soldiers. Some women saw an opportunity for long-term service and some were quite happy to contribute to the war effort and to then return to hearth and home. The WAAC/WAC leadership practices allowed for the full integration of both types of soldiers. In that respect, Hobby never envisioned that the Corps would continue after the war. Nor did she see a reason for it to continue. Those who followed her, however, did. They saw opportunities for continued contribution and because of the strong foundation laid by women like Hobby, Wilson and Adams, they were able to continue to be a part of the Army.

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<sup>1</sup> need info for note

<sup>2</sup>FM 22-100, 3-16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 3-17.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Sally A. Carless, "Sex Roles," A Journal Research, December 1998. *Gender Differences in transformational leadership: An examination of superior, leader, and subordinate perspectives.* *what is this info in italics? If journal, then journal title in italics?*

<sup>6</sup>Transformation Roadmap, Forward *throughout the text this is in italics-- document or article title.*

<sup>7</sup>Dr. Barbara Gilliss, "The Unique Qualities of Female Leadership"; available from <http://www.winaz.org/female-leadership.html>; Internet.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Judy B. Rosener, "Ways Women Lead." *Harvard Business Review* (November/December 1990) : 125. Dr. Rosener teaches and does research in the areas of men and women at work, cultural diversity, and business and government. She has published articles in academic journals and the popular press, and is a sought after speaker in both the public and private sector. She received her Ph.D. from the Center for Politics and Economics, at the Claremont Graduate University.

<sup>10</sup>Helgsen, 25

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *The WAC Officer: A Guide to Successful Leadership* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944; reprint, Washington, DC: War Department, February 1945), 2 (hereafter cited as *WAC Officer Guide*).2.

<sup>13</sup>Dr. Lorraine R. Matusak, "Leadership: Gender Related, *Not* Gender Specific, in Concepts, Challenges, and Realities of Leadership: An International Perspective," *Selected Proceedings from the Salzburg Seminar on International Leadership*, ed. James McGregor Burns Georgia Sorenson, and Lorraine Matusak, James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership, paragraph 5, available from [www.academy.umd.edu/scholarship/casl/salzburg/chapter3.htm](http://www.academy.umd.edu/scholarship/casl/salzburg/chapter3.htm).

<sup>14</sup>Rosener, 125.

<sup>15</sup>Treadwell, 20-21.

<sup>16</sup>Transformation Roadmap, Forward.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *WAC Officer Guide*.

<sup>19</sup>FM 22-100, *Army Leadership* (city, state: publisher, August 1999).

<sup>20</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *WAC Officer Guide*, generally.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 21-22, 32-33, and 63-65.

<sup>22</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *WAC Officer Guide*, generally.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 4.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 20-22.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>ACT 16 September 1940, CH. 720, 54 STAT. 885.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>“Leadership, How to Use the Rating Scale” (Fort Benning, GA: The Infantry School, 1944).

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>41</sup>Transformation Leadership Roadmap, 1.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 15, Operational Transformation. The Warrior culture is discussed in terms of incorporating the best of the heavy force; light force, and Special Operations Force to form the Warrior culture.

<sup>45</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *WAC Officer Guide*, 4.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>47</sup>Roadmap, Z.

<sup>48</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *WAC Officer Guide*, 12-13.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Treadwell, 70-71.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>58</sup>War Department, Pamphlet No. 35-2, *WAC Officer Guide*, 1-65 passim.

<sup>59</sup>Treadwell, 677.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The leadership style displayed by the women of the WAAC/WAC provides an example of transformational leadership applicable to today's leaders. Transformational leadership provides leaders with another method of leading soldiers during a period of rapid change. It will not replace traditional hierarchical leadership, but when used in combination with it, complements it. Transformational leadership is another way to build teams, instill confidence, and build esprit de corps within units. The women of the WAAC/WAC exemplified this leadership style. They quickly adapted to changes within the Army that directly impacted their mission accomplishment. Their contribution to the Army was a significant one, forming the basis for women to serve today and providing a leadership style worthy of study and emulation.

The leaders of the WAAC developed their own leadership doctrine. In two years, the experiences of the women leading the WAAC became their leadership guide. It was based on the common experiences of the women who served. The *WAC Officer Guide* reflects the leadership styles of Hobby, Wilson, and Adams. It emphasizes the leader's responsibility to the subordinates and the importance of understanding the individuals in the leader's charge. It emphasized stewardship and service to country, the Corps, subordinates, and superiors. The *WAC Officer Guide* reflects many of the traditional U.S. Army leadership values: duty, honor, loyalty, integrity, and selfless service.

The success of the WAAC/WAC also resulted from setting and maintaining high standards, while forming an organization from the ground up. High standards were part

of the command climate for the organization and gave individuals entering the WAAC/WAC an anchor point. Women joining the Army would be WACs, soldiers in an organization founded on fundamentals and setting the standard in everything they did. This was the WAC “warrior ethos.”

As writers like Sally Helgesen, one of the popular thinkers about the role of work and leadership in the “knowledge economy,” point out, women’s leadership style “derives from their consciousness of themselves as participants in a revolution in expectations of and opportunities for women . . . they feel they must make a difference.”<sup>1</sup> This notion sums up the view of women leaders during World War II. This is the attitude that will help successfully lead the transforming Army. Soldiers will need to feel that they are making a difference.

The leaders of the transforming Army, not unlike Oveta Hobby, will be responsible for the success of this great “experiment” called transformation. It will be today’s leaders ideas that form the leadership doctrine for the future. Today’s soldiers will be tomorrow’s leaders and the leadership styles that they see will provide them with the tools for leading in the future. Knowing and understanding the organization and the individuals with it, establishing and embracing a common “warrior ethos,” and insuring that soldiers are well cared for will enable success of the Army’s transformation. The study of women leaders, like Hobby and others, is another “roadmap” for accomplishing that mission.

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<sup>1</sup>Sally Helgesen, *The Female Advantage Women’s Ways of Leadership* (New York: Currency Paperback, 1990; reprint 1995).

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